

Minutes of Board Meeting
May 13, 2020
10:00 a.m.
Virtual Meeting

Present

David Connell, Chairman
Jeff Markey, Vice Chairman
Jeff Wigington, Secretary
Rachel Little
Bob Pierce
Britt Fleck

Not Present

Jim Cole
Wallace Coopwood

Also attending the meeting virtually was Kimberly Daniel from the State Attorney General's Office and members of the DDS Staff.

Establish Quorum/Call to Order

Chairman Connell confirmed the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Connell called for a motion regarding the Minutes from the April 8, 2020 Board meeting. Britt Fleck motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes as presented; Jeff Markey seconded the motion, with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Commissioner's Report

The Commissioner welcomed the Chairman and members of the Board. He thanked the staff for adapting and operating in a new normal. He said that the agency has a very dedicated team and expressed his gratitude for each of them driving these challenging months. DDS is in a constant state of change, and the staff is working more now through the virtual meeting format, which will be used for the next few Board meetings. The Commissioner started his discussion with the request for all state agencies to reduce their budgets by 14%, which represents roughly a \$10 million cut for DDS. The initial reduction was 6%, which is about \$4.5 million. DDS is working hard to determine specifically what will be required to meet the larger amount. The agency already has eliminated many vacancies and renegotiated several vendor contracts. These measures allow DDS to make the cuts without having to eliminate existing staff. The Commissioner is proud of that and will provide more details at the next Board meeting.

Regarding the pandemic, most of the staff are coming to the office in some limited capacity, especially the Field Operations team. All 67 centers are now open. Services are handled on an appointment only basis and that will continue for the foreseeable future. The centers are triaging issues and ensuring that customers have an appointment and can be served.

Team members are equipped with the required PPE, and the Centers are being wiped down daily. At Headquarters, divisions are staggering work weeks and teleworking as appropriate. The Contact Center operations are spread throughout the agency to meet social distancing requirements. Social distancing is being promoted strongly throughout the agency to reduce the risk of possible exposure, and all employees have been issued washable facemasks. Team members who may work within six feet of customers have been issued disposable face masks also. The agency has increased the frequency of janitorial services, provided hand sanitizer, and limited the number of people that can enter the building. DDS has operated utilizing the guidance of the CDC and Department of Public Health.

DDS has spent nearly \$1 million for PPE, sanitizing, and glass partitions to meet the needs of protecting team members and serving customers safely. The lobby area of each CSC is limited to eight people, although that number may be increased to ten in the near future. Workstation occupancy is staggered so that no two examiners are working side by side, and the examiners inform customers that DDS is practicing social distancing. Before entering a CSC, all customers must sign an affidavit to affirm that they have not been exposed to Covid-19, are not showing any signs or symptoms, and have not visited countries considered high risk. The agency will update that document as needed, based on new information that is coming out by the CDC each week. The Commissioner informed the Board that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) extended the deadline for Secure ID compliant cards until October 1, 2021. DDS is 98% compliant and in good shape to achieve this new date. The Chairman asked if DDS allowed multiple members of a family to enter the center at one time, and the Commissioner informed him that we are not permitting that, but we will allow responsible adults into the entryway to complete or sign documents.

On April 23rd, an Executive Order waived the requirement for a driving skills road test. It also allowed those who turned 15 years old during the pandemic, who were unable to be served or get an appointment to obtain their provisional license on their 16th birthday. Only the former part received a lot of publicity. DDS had recommended that drivers who had taken the 30 hours classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind the wheel to receive waivers, and the public and press provided a lot of comment and feedback. A new Executive Order, signed on May 12th, requires DDS to road test any of those individuals that did not take a road test to do so by September 30th. After meeting late last night, agency leadership developed a plan to implement the new order and will begin serving this population on Mondays beginning June 1st. DDS will mail notifications to affected individuals, informing them that they must return for a road test by the end of September.

Prior to COVID-19, the CSC's performed 5400 to 5500 non-commercial road tests each week. However, due to the risk of exposure, the examiners will not be getting in the cars of non-commercial vehicles right now. Commissioner Moore thanked Director Kecia Bivins, Deputy Director Pierre Miles, and the Field Operations team for successfully piloting a process last week that allows the agency to conduct road tests on the premises while observing from outside the vehicle. The goal was to perform and test all vital parts of the road test and ensure the safety of the examiners, while ensuring the proper skills of the driver. The agency established the effectiveness of the new test, and it was implemented statewide as of today.

The Chairman offered the Board's assistance, and the Commissioner expressed his appreciation. The agency still has different scenarios to work through, such as when teenagers leave for college or military service. DDS will have to make provisions to deal with those customers. The Commissioner and leadership team will meet later in the day to develop the next plan of action, such as posting the new plan to the website. Vice Chairman Markey emphasized that the agency's communications should explain the modified test and ensure the public that it still will be a full test. In the near future, the Commissioner hopes to obtain additional technology that will allow the examiners to see both the inside of the vehicle and what the driver is seeing, virtually through Wi-Fi technology.

The Commissioner shared the agency's activities for the month of April regarding Covid-19. The leadership team is in constant communication with the staff. The Communications team is sending communications out to the team members three to four times a week, and the Commissioner tries to send something out at least once a week from his perspective. The Field Operations team continuously talks to its staff about COVID-19 and develops new plans for reacting to different situations. The Commissioner provided some of the communications and graphics provided to the staff to show ways to make hand washing a little more entertaining. Social distancing is the agency's focus to ensure team member safety.

Deborah Moore (HR Director) provided an update on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA):

- The Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act adds a qualifying reason for an employee to be eligible for 12 weeks of job-protected family and medical leave. The new provision also increases eligibility for Family Medical Leave for this limited reason to any employee that has been employed for at least 30 calendar days. While the first 10 days of the emergency family and medical leave may be unpaid, after those 10 days, employers must provide 2/3 of the employee's regular rate of pay.
- The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act provides for 80 hours of a new type of administrative paid leave for absences caused by COVID-19. The Act allows an employee to take leave due to an inability to work or telework.

Kecia Bivins (Director of Field Operations) provided an update on Contact Center service levels and call volume:

- The service level remained at 80% or above until March, when it fell to a low of 67.29%. In April it was at 50.80%. The typical call volume is between 7,000 and 10,000 calls per day, but the agency has experienced some record volumes between 18,000 and 19,000 calls per day. The Contact Center received 111,000 calls during the month of March and 156,000 in April. So far, we have received 101,000 for the month of May, so this will be a record setting month. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner tasked Field Operations to find a way for more team members to assist with the calls, and they started a pilot on April 21st at three centers, where examiners started answering calls. The Help Desk and Central Issuance group also helped. A total of 18,400 calls were answered remotely and did not have to go to the Contact Center, which is a great example of how DDS reassigns resources to help meet customer demand.
- So many new customers have created online accounts and changing passwords that Microsoft suspected fraudulent activity and suspended the agency's email account. Over 150,000 emails were created in one day, which triggered a fraud alert. When the email account was suspended, the Contact Center volume increased, and at one time, over 800 calls were queued. Unfortunately, that brought down the phone system and disconnected everyone in the queue, but fortunately, the vendor was able to restore service in about 15 minutes. Microsoft was able to restore our email service the very next day.

Michael Mitchell (Director of Regulatory Compliance) provided an update on the Regulatory Compliance Division:

- Records Management:
 - This group was divided into two rotating teams of approximate 17 staff members and arranged in separate work areas so that social distancing could be maintained. Mimi Barron, the manager, has done a phenomenal job putting together a telework plan.
- Headquarters (HQ) Operations:
 - The staff was provided laptops which allowed many of the team members to work rotating telework days. They have been able to maintain less than 10 staff members at Headquarters each day.
- Field Operations and CDL Compliance:
 - The Field Operations and CDL Compliance team traditionally work in the field, so they had the resources needed to work remotely. Some of those team members are working from home, as well as going out into the field to observe and conduct audits.
- Paper Citation Processing:
 - Although citation processing decreased slightly in March and April, Mimi's groups have done a phenomenal job keeping the paper citations processed and updated to the driving records in a timely manner. In April, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) recognized a lot of the courts were closed and DMVs were working with limited crews. The conditions make it virtually impossible for states to meet the 10-day Federal reporting requirement, so the FMCSA relaxed that for a period of 90 days or the duration of the National Health Emergency, whichever ends first. Due to the grace period, the FMCSA audit report should not contain a finding for this.

Bob Griffin (CFO) provided an update on Facilities:

- The department will be installing glass partitions at all 67 centers. This should be done methodically, looking at volume, places with the most impact, and some of the hot spots. Albany was the first CSC completed, due to the high number of cases in that area. We are hopeful the glass will bolster security and safety. Fifteen sites have been approved and scheduled for installation, and the balance are being estimated. The glass fronts have been an item of discussion since Commissioner Moore began working for the agency in 2012.
- Bob showed a picture of the Atlanta parking expansion, which showed the area blocked off and a bulldozer on site. A security guard remains on site to mitigate any issues that people may have with parking. The project tentatively is scheduled to be completed on June 24th.

The Commissioner provided an update on the agency's performance. The customer volume numbers are much lower than normal but will increase over the next few months. DDS is expanding the appointment system, and the Commissioner asked the Board to let him know if they hear of customers that are not able to receive an appointment for a critical service. So far, the process has worked well, and DDS is prioritizing customers that need to complete transactions in person.

One benefit of the additional, newly established online accounts is that they will reduce the postcard and written notices that need to be sent via the USPS. Customers can opt into receiving electronic communications, thereby saving the agency money in the future. Only 45 mobile app transactions were conducted during the month of April though, due to a problem with a new version release from the Apple store. The problem is resolved now, so both the Mobile App and online services are functioning to serve customers remotely.

DDS did not receive as many customer surveys as normal due to the lower CSC volumes, and all complaints continue to be reviewed by Deputy Commissioner Ricky Rich. At times, an issue cannot be resolved due to a pending court action or other outstanding circumstance, but the agency takes those seriously and still sends a response.

The Commissioner ended his report telling the Board about the exceptional team members at DDS. Through this pandemic, one might think employees would complain about the new and different processes; however, the Commissioner has received only four or five complaints. He has, however, received 50-100 communications from staff to thank him for providing a safe environment and offering prayers. Obviously, this is a stressful time for leadership, and receiving that type of feedback from team members is amazing. Commissioner Moore saluted the Executive Team because everyone is working from the time they wake up until late at night every single day to come up with solutions to serve our customers, soliciting ideas from team members, and obtaining their buy in which is not always easy.

Chairman Connell indicated that sometimes there is an upside to a disaster like this. The employees should feel proud to be a part of an organization like DDS. The pay may not be as high, but the ability to stay working in situations like this is great. There is a book he recommended to Deputy Commissioner Ricky Rich. The title is *A Complaint Is a Gift*. Complaints are opportunities to improve situations, and statistics indicate that for every person that complains, an additional 25-35 probably also wanted to complain. The Deputy Commissioner is performing an important job by managing the complaints.

Rules for Initial Approval

Angelique McClendon, General Counsel, reviewed the following rules:

- **375-1-1-.01** Organization
- **375-1-1-.02** Service of Process
- **375-1-1-.05** Procedures for Requesting Rule Changes
- **375-3-1-.31** Satisfaction of School Requirements for Customers Under Age Eighteen (18)
- **375-3-3-.09** Extensions of Temporary Driving Permits

Jeff Markey motioned to approve the initial rules for adoption; Britt Fleck seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Rules for Final Approval

- **375-3-1-.02** Applications and supporting Documentation

Britt Fleck motioned to approve the final rules for adoption; Jeff Markey seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Citizen Waivers

1. James Frank Beard – He is seeking a Georgia ID in the name of James Frank Beard. He is 75 years old. He has used his father's surname through life and that name was never added to his birth certificate (BC). His mother's surname is Cheek. He submitted his birth certificate (mother – Eva Mae Cheeks, father was not listed), school records, juvenile record (father – James Ernest Beard, Mother – Eva Mae Beard), marriage application (father – James Ernest Beard, Mother – Eva Mae Cheek Beard), child's BC, divorce decree, father's obituary (father – James Ernest Beard), custody document, Social Security (S/S) application, application for Replacement S/S card, expired Indiana (IN) ID, and S/S card.

Rachel Little motioned to approve the waiver; Britt Fleck seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

2. Willamena M. Miller – She is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of Willamena M. Miller. She is 70 years old. She is missing her birth certificate. She was born in Louisiana (LA) but went back home to New York right after birth. Her birth certificate was never filed in LA. She submitted her school record (parent – Willie), school diploma, S/S Application, child's birth certificate, marriage certificate (spouse – Nathaniel Miller), affidavit from aunt and cousin, expired Virginia (VA) driver's license, S/S card, nursing license, birth not found (father – Willie Glover, mother – Margaret Hart), Numident (oldest entry-1965, parents names: Margaret Hart and William Glover), and Medicare card.

Jeff Markey motioned to approve the waiver; Rachel Little seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

3. Kaheila Naosha Williams – She is seeking a Georgia driver's license in the name of Kaheila Naosha Williams. She is 38 years old. Her father changed her birth certificate when she was 1 years old. She has used her mother's surname of Williams since then. She submitted her birth certificate (father – George J. Perry, mother – Sonja D. Williams), school record (father – George Perry), Valid Florida (FL) driver's license, children's birth certificates, S/S card, tax return, and FL MVR.

Jeff Wigington motioned to deny the waiver; Rachel Little seconded the motion with unanimous denial by the remaining Board members.

New or Old Business

The next Board meeting will be held on June 10, 2020.

Adjournment

There was no further business to discuss; Chairman David Connell called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Jeff Wigington and seconded by Britt Fleck with unanimous approval by the Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Wigington

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